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Message Text

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ACTION HA-05

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00
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R 310914Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7471
INFO USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SREF, SU
SUBJ: REFUGEES IN SUDAN

REF: (A) STATE 129021; (B) GENEVA 7986; (C) KHARTOUM 2314

1. MR. DEMEKE TEKLE-WOLD OF FORT WAYNE, INDIANA CALLED ON ME ON MAY 30. TEKLE-WOLD WAS MEMBER OF GROUP WHO VISITED SUDAN IN LATE AUGUST 1977 (PARA 2, REF A) AND WITH WHOM I MET AT THAT TIME. TEKLE-WOLD'S GROUP IS INTERESTED IN CARRYING OUT ASSISTANCE PROJECT FOR NON-ERITREAN ETHIOPIAN REFUGEES IN SUDAN. "PROJECT MERCY" WOULD INVOLVE PERMANENT REPRESENTATION IN KHARTOUM AS WELL AS POSSIBLE SERVICES AT CAMP OF AMERICAN VOLUNTEER AGRICULTURIST.

2. TEKLE-WOLD WAS GREATLY DISCOURAGED BY HIS CONVERSATIONS IN KHARTOUM. SUDAN REFUGEE AUTHORITIES SAID NON-ERITREAN ETHIOPIAN REFUGEES IN THE COUNTRY WERE UNDER CONTROL OF SUDAN SECURITY AUTHORITIES AND NEW FOREIGN PRESENCE IN THE CAMP WOULD PROBABLY NOT BE PERMITTED. "PROJECT MERCY" WOULD HAVE TO DISTRIBUTE MATERIAL ASSISTANCE TO REFUGEES VIA SUDANGOV OR OTHER AGENCY ALREADY OPERATING IN THE COUNTRY UNDER AN AGREEMENT WITH SUDANGOV. TEKLE-WOLD SAID THAT SUDAN
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COUNCIL OF CHURCHES HAD INDICATED IT COULD HELP DELIVER SUPPLIES, BUT PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE HAD DEMONSTRATED THAT COUNCIL WOULD DELIVER RELIEF GOODS ACCORDING TO ITS OWN DETERMINATION OF PRIORITY NEEDS. THIS ALLEGEDLY HAD HAPPENED WITH A SHIPMENT OF CLOTHING SENT TO THE SUDAN FROM FORT WAYNE. TEKLE-WOLD ALSO DISAPPOINTED BY HIS TALKS WITH KHARTOUM REP OF UNHRC. LAGGER ALLEGEDLY HAD TOLD HIM THAT

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NON-ERITREAN ETHIOPIAN REFUGEES WERE A HIGHLY SENSITIVE
POLITICAL MATTER FOR SUDANGOV AND ADVISED "PROJECT MERCY"
TO SEEK TO ASSIST OTHER GROUPS, SUCH AS UGANDAN REFUGEES.

3. I COULD OFFER TEKLE-WOLD LITTLE ENCOURAGEMENT. I SAID
THERE HAD BEEN TWO SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS SINCE INDIANA
GROUP'S VISIT LAST AUGUST. FIRST, SUDANGOV HAD SHIFTED
ITS POLICY AND WAS NOW ACTIVELY SEEKING TO IMPROVE ITS
RELATIONS WITH ETHIOPIA. SUDANESE PRIMARY OBJECTIVE WAS
RETURN OF ANSAR DISSIDENTS FROM ETHIOPIA TO SUDAN.
SECONDLY, SUDANESE GREATLY CONCERNED AT PROSPECT OF RENEWED
ETHIOPIAN OFFENSIVE IN ERITREA SPILLING OVER THEIR BORDERS.
TO MY GREAT REGRET, I CONCLUDED THAT I SAW LITTLE CHANCE FOR
SUDANGOV'S PERMITTING A NEW FOREIGN GROUP, "PROJECT MERCY",
TO WORK DIRECTLY WITH NON-ERITREAN ETHIOPIANS IN AN INCREASINGLY
SENSITIVE BORDER AREA.

4. COMMENT: I AM VERY SORRY THAT THE POLITICO- MILITARY
SITUATION HERE HAS EVOLVED IN SUCH A WAY AS TO
FRUSTRATE THE CHARITABLE IMPULSES OF THIS INDIANA GROUP.
I WAS MOST IMPRESSED WITH REPRESENTATIVES WHOM I MET
LAST AUGUST. FOR THE MOMENT, HOWEVER, I THINK THE ONLY
VIABLE PROSPECT FOR THEM IS TO WORK THROUGH AN ESTABLISHED
VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATION ALREADY WORKING IN THE SUDAN.

5. DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO BRIEF CONGRESSMAN ADAIR'S
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OFFICE ON FOREGOING.
BERGUS

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